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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 1 July to 12 September 2013

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past three months, pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended by subsequent resolutions, most recently through resolution 2108 (2013).

II. Situation in the area and activities of the Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was generally maintained, albeit in a continuously volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. Violations of the ceasefire are set out below. The Syrian Arab Armed Forces continued to deploy personnel and equipment inside the area of separation and carried out military activities and security operations against armed members of the opposition in the UNDOF area of operation, often in response to offensives carried out by members of the armed opposition. Inside the area of separation, the presence of the Syrian armed forces and unauthorized military equipment is in violation of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israeli and Syrian forces.

3. The continuing military activities conducted by any actor in the area of separation continue to have the potential to increase tensions between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, jeopardize the ceasefire between the two countries and pose a risk to the local civilian population and United Nations personnel on the ground. As underscored by the Security Council in its resolution 2108 (2013), there should be no military activity by armed opposition groups in the area of separation.

4. In the context of the continuing clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, there were several reports of firing across the ceasefire line, including by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in what they asserted was retaliation for fire from the Bravo side that had landed on the Alpha side. On 27 June, IDF alleged that a rocket-propelled grenade fired from north of Al Quneitra had landed across the ceasefire line on the Alpha side, approximately 1 to 2 km north-east of United Nations position 22. On 9 July, IDF informed UNDOF that an IDF patrol had been fired upon in the vicinity of United Nations observation

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post 51. An UNDOF investigation found evidence of firing at the specified location. On 14 July, IDF reported to UNDOF the firing of two artillery shots by the Syrian armed forces west of the ceasefire line and east of the technical fence in the vicinity of United Nations outpost 37B. An UNDOF patrol sent to the area could not confirm any impact at the specified location, nor did United Nations personnel report any firing. In the course of the events on 16 July (see paras. 7 and 8), artillery rounds impacted west of the ceasefire line. On 17 and 18 August in the Braika and Bir Ajam area (see para. 10 below), a few rounds of indirect fire impacted across the ceasefire line on the Alpha side. In response, IDF fired two rockets across the ceasefire line on a Syrian armed forces position in Al Harrah in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line are violations of the Disengagement Agreement.

5. In the late evening of 16 July, IDF reported to UNDOF that two persons had crossed the Alpha line to the north of United Nations position 85 and entered an unmanned IDF outpost. An IDF patrol, which reportedly had been fired upon by the unidentified individuals, was dispatched to the location.

6. Clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition continued throughout the reporting period, in particular in the villages of Jabbata, Trunje, Ufaniyah, Al Horaye, Al Quatanyia, Bir Ajam and Braika in the area of separation. Small arms fire from inside the area of separation and artillery, mortar, main battle tank, machine gun and anti aircraft fire from the area of limitation in close vicinity to the Bravo line occurred on a daily basis. Clashes also continued in the areas of Khan Arnabeh, Al Baath and Al Hamidiyah, principally along the main UNDOF supply road. At times, UNDOF observed the Syrian armed forces reinforcing their positions in the area.

7. In the early morning hours of 16 July, some 40 to 50 armed members of the opposition, approaching from Bir Ajam via Ruwayhinah in the south of the area of separation, launched an attack on a Syrian armed forces position in the vicinity of Al Quatanyia. Syrian armed forces soldiers returned small arms, artillery and mortar fire from a location to the north of United Nations observation post 72 and a second location close to Camp Faouar. In the course of the fighting, United Nations personnel recorded five artillery rounds impacting west of the ceasefire line. The United Nations also observed two IDF Merkava tanks deployed on top of a hill located between Camp Ziouani and United Nations observation post 51, at a distance of some 1.5 km from the camp. Several heavy explosions could be heard in Al Quatanyia during the course of the fighting, at least one of which is assumed to have been caused by an improvised explosive device that hit a Syrian armed forces tank along the main road east of Al Quneitra. One damaged tank was subsequently observed near United Nations position 25 at the eastern boundary of the area of separation from where it was towed out of the area. As the fighting in Al Quatanyia continued, Syrian armed forces also fired in the direction of Jabbata, Trunje and Ufaniyah in the northern part of the area of separation and at Bir Ajam and Braika in the southern part of the area.

8. During the clashes, United Nations personnel observed seven tanks and five armoured personnel carriers enter the area of separation and move into the southern outskirts of Al Quneitra and Al Quatanyia, further to which the UNDOF Force Commander immediately established contact with the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate and urged the tanks and armoured personnel carriers to be withdrawn without delay

because their presence was in violation of the Disengagement Agreement. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate informed UNDOF that Syrian armed forces personnel and heavy equipment had entered the area of separation to defend Al Quatanyia and prevent a repetition of the events of 6 June 2013 when members of the armed opposition had attacked and taken control of the Bravo gate, killing two Syrian liaison officers and taking another prisoner. He emphasized that there was no intention to enter into conflict with IDF or to escalate the situation. As on previous occasions, UNDOF reiterated that any such actions were in violation of the Disengagement Agreement and needed to stop. The UNDOF Force Commander also met the IDF Division Commander at an IDF observation post in the vicinity of United Nations observation post 51 and observed the continuing clashes in the area of separation. IDF, in turn, reported 10 artillery impacts west of the ceasefire line, including in the vicinity of IDF positions. IDF stated that the presence of tanks in the area of separation would not be tolerated and that it would retaliate should there be further violations of the ceasefire line. The UNDOF Force Commander remained in close contact with both sides throughout the incident, stressing the importance of exercising maximum restraint, in an effort to prevent an escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line and ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

9. After approximately four hours, the fighting around Al Quatanyia ended, while firing by the Syrian armed forces in and into eastern and northern areas of the area of separation continued until around noon. Subsequently, UNDOF observed members of the armed opposition retreating from Al Quatanyia and moving towards the south of the area of separation. By midday, all tanks and armoured personnel carriers had left the area of separation. In the period following those events, UNDOF observed three Syrian armed forces armoured personnel carriers in the vicinity of Al Baath in the area of separation.

10. Throughout the day of 16 July, the main road connecting Camp Faouar and the Alpha gate remained closed as a precautionary measure; in addition, the Alpha gate was closed during the fighting. During the most severe period of the fighting, peacekeepers in Camp Ziouani and Charlie gate personnel temporarily went into shelters. Following small arms fire close to United Nations observation post 51, United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers operationally integrated into the Force as Observer Group Golan also took shelter. The following day, upon inspection, UNDOF confirmed damage to the window of the sentry post at United Nations position 68 caused by three 120-mm mortar rounds that fell in close proximity to the position.

11. Major clashes occurred again on the morning of 17 August, when armed members of the opposition attacked Syrian army checkpoints in Ruwayhinah and Braika. The Syrian armed forces counter-attacked and a heavy firefight ensued in Bir Ajam and Braika, lasting into the evening. Clashes resumed with less intensity the following morning. During the clashes, Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition fired a total of 199 artillery rounds, 6 tank rounds, 3 mortar rounds and 25 anti-aircraft rounds, in addition to small arms rounds and nine rocket-propelled grenades, and operated in close proximity to United Nations positions 68 and 69. On 17 August, two rounds of anti-aircraft fire and shrapnel hit the kitchen and the roof of an accommodation block in United Nations position 68. An explosion on 18 August near the gate of United Nations position 68 cut the cables for the perimeter lighting. All United Nations personnel at the two positions took

shelter throughout the fighting; no one was wounded. The UNDOF Force Commander was in close contact with both the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate and IDF. He emphasized to the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate that the actions of the Syrian armed forces were in violation of the Disengagement Agreement and risked an escalation of the security situation in the Golan. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate again stated that the Syrian Arab Republic had no intention of entering into conflict with IDF or escalating the situation. IDF also reiterated that it had no intention of escalating the conflict either, while warning that it would not tolerate shells landing on its side of the ceasefire line and that it reserved the right to respond, in particular should any shells land in close proximity to and endanger its population. The UNDOF Force Commander urged both sides to exercise maximum restraint, in an effort to prevent an escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line and ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

12. Earlier in the reporting period, on 24 July, a major coordinated offensive, employing artillery shelling, was undertaken by the Syrian armed forces in the southern part of the area of limitation, centring on the villages of Al Magles, Lukarzi and Saida. From United Nations observation posts located in the southern area of the UNDOF area of operation, United Nations personnel observed the Syrian armed forces carrying out a sweeping operation of the three villages. Two tanks were used to block routes while a systematic search was carried out. On 20 June, the Syrian armed forces carried out what appeared to be a planned and coordinated operation using tanks and heavy artillery in the area of Ufaniyah, following an attack on one of their checkpoints there by armed members of the opposition. Personnel at United Nations positions 25, 32 and 37 occupied shelters at various times during the operation.

13. In making its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and to see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed by the Disengagement Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line. UNDOF continued to observe and report instances of transborder movements of unidentified individuals between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in the northern part of the area of separation. During the reporting period, the number of individuals observed was small and largely comprised women and children, although some armed men also were observed.

14. The Syrian security forces continued to maintain the checkpoints that they established inside the area of separation when they began military operations in the area. In addition, Syrian armed forces personnel maintained checkpoints at the eastern entrances to the area of separation, straddling the Bravo line, to control and restrict traffic. The checkpoints have often interfered with the freedom of movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan. Restrictions on the movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan in the areas of separation and limitation have increased as a result of the clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition. The situation has resulted in the frequent closure of the UNDOF main supply road, thus hampering the movements of UNDOF between Camp Faouar on the Bravo side and Camp Ziouani on the Alpha side. UNDOF frequently resorted to the use of bypass roads, which are not accessible at night. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate advised UNDOF that, for security reasons, all United Nations personnel should avoid areas where there were clashes and that UNDOF should not carry out night-time patrols. Beginning in early June, Observer Group Golan members encountered an increased number of restrictions of movement on the Alpha side when entering and exiting observation posts 52 and 73, located to the east of the

Israeli technical fence. Following a meeting between UNDOF and IDF, the issue was resolved by mid-August.

15. On occasion, during clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, in addition to those reported in the context of the events of 16 July, direct and indirect fire landed in the vicinity of United Nations installations, forcing United Nations personnel to seek shelter. On 24 June, an intense firefight took place between the Syrian armed forces and members of the armed opposition in the vicinity of United Nations position 25, during which UNDOF personnel there took shelter. UNDOF recorded 11 bullet impacts that damaged the sentry box and United Nations property inside. On 4 July, United Nations personnel at observation post 51 sought shelter owing to close impacts as a result of mortar and small arms fire by the Syrian armed forces against armed members of the opposition in the area of Al Quatanyia. On 6 August, during heavy shelling in the vicinity of Jabbata, personnel at United Nations position 37 sought shelter as a precautionary measure. No injuries were sustained by United Nations personnel.

16. During the reporting period, United Nations personnel encountered increased restrictions of movement and increased risk to their safety as a result of the placement of improvised explosive devices alongside roads in the area of separation. A series of exploded devices were located along the main road near Al Hamidiyah in the aftermath of the clashes of 16 July in the vicinity of Al Quatanyia. An UNDOF explosive ordnance disposal team investigated the site and collected fragments, which a Syrian armed forces patrol confiscated. The arrangement of the devices points to a significant skill level in their use. The presence of a roadblock consisting of several layers of stones has been observed since 17 July approximately 500 m south of United Nations position 60. On 23 July, when an UNDOF team was examining the roadblock, shots were fired in the direction of the team from nearby houses. Based on photo analysis, an UNDOF explosive ordnance disposal team was able to identify four anti-tank mines placed among rocks. Since 26 July, a roadblock has been observed on a route south-east of United Nations observation post 72. Two improvised explosive devices were located on both access roads to United Nations observation post 56; one has been observed since 1 August, some 150 m south-south-east of the observation post. The second, consisting of multiple charges placed on both sides of the road, was observed from 11 August on the road 150 m to the east of observation post 56. On 14 August, members of the armed opposition removed four of the charges. UNDOF explosive ordnance disposal personnel removed the remaining 12 the following day.

17. On 20 and 21 July, the movement of two UNDOF convoys was restricted by armed individuals in the vicinity of Mazra'at Bayt Jinn in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. On 20 July, a convoy comprising 11 vehicles conducted the deployment of Nepalese troops to Mount Hermon. Unidentified individuals armed with AK-47 rifles and pistols demanded to check the United Nations vehicles and search luggage and for weapons to be handed over. In the course of the incident, the armed elements readied their weapons and the leader pointed his pistol towards an UNDOF driver, demanding that he hand over the United Nations vehicle. The driver refused. Following a standoff, at the end of which the armed elements quarrelled among one another, the convoy was able to pass. The convoy was stopped once more, briefly, on its return journey, but without further incident. The following morning, the driver noticed two bullet holes in the rear license plate. On 21 July, a convoy of two United Nations armoured vehicles was blocked by unidentified

persons, some of whom were armed. One individual fired three shots, pointing his weapon upward. Another subsequently fired three shots at the rear of one of the vehicles, pointing his weapon towards the ground. The two vehicles swiftly left the location and returned to Camp Faouar. Upon inspection, no damage was found.

18. At the time of writing of the present report, armed members of the opposition had gained ground in the southern part of the UNDOF area of responsibility and enhanced their presence in close proximity to United Nations positions, restricting the freedom of movement of UNDOF and its ability to operate unimpeded. That the areas of Bayt Jinn and Mazra'at Bayt Jinn in the north also have come under the influence of the armed opposition groups affects the ability of UNDOF to sustain its personnel in the Mount Hermon positions.

19. UNDOF has protested against the presence of Syrian armed forces and equipment in the area of separation, the firing into and inside the area of separation and the firing at United Nations personnel and facilities. The Force Commander reiterated to the Syrian authorities the obligation of the armed forces to halt military operations in the area of separation and to cease firing from the area of limitation, stressing the importance of abiding by the terms of the Disengagement Agreement and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. Senior United Nations officials have conveyed similar messages to the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations.

20. Within this challenging operational environment, UNDOF supervised the area of separation by manning static positions to ensure that the military forces of both parties were excluded from it. Since mid-July, UNDOF, through Observer Group Golan, has been establishing temporary observation posts in several locations along the ceasefire line between two and four times per week, so as to increase the Force's situational awareness of the area of separation, in particular in the south where United Nations positions and observation posts have been vacated temporarily owing to the security situation. Through Observer Group Golan, UNDOF continued to carry out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. Liaison officers from the Alpha side accompanied Observer Group Golan inspection teams. The deteriorating security situation on the Bravo side also resulted in the temporary suspension, since 5 March, of inspections and mobile operations in the area of limitation. As in the past, the Force faced restrictions on freedom of movement and its inspection teams were denied access to some positions on the Alpha side.

21. UNDOF continued to adapt its operational posture to the continuing IDF training activities and new military construction in the area of limitation on the Alpha side, Syrian civilian developments in proximity to the ceasefire line in the area of separation and increased military activities from the positions of the Syrian armed forces along the Bravo line. IDF continued to enhance the technical fence to prevent crossings from the area of separation. Both sides maintained their defensive positions in the respective areas of limitation. Israeli customs officials continued to operate periodically at the IDF post at the UNDOF crossing gate between the Israeli-occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

22. On 11 July, UNDOF, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, facilitated the crossing of 23 students through the Alpha and Bravo gates to the Israeli-occupied Golan. On 21 August, 35 students crossed from the Israeli-occupied Golan under the same arrangement. UNDOF continued to provide medical

treatment, including emergency medical treatment, to civilians on a strictly humanitarian basis. During periods of intensive shelling by the Syrian armed forces in late July and early August in the general area encompassing the villages of Saida, Al Magles, Lukarsi and Brudjum, located in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side, local inhabitants fled the villages in a westerly direction, taking shelter in the vicinity of United Nations position 85. At the height of the shelling, up to 300 villagers gathered near the United Nations position during the nights and between 30 and 40 during the days. By mid-August, the presence of internally displaced persons near the position had reduced to around 40 to 50. Apart from treating a civilian for a snakebite on 26 July, no other support has been requested by the internally displaced persons from United Nations personnel at the position. At times, UNDOF saw armed men among the internally displaced persons. On several occasions since the beginning of August, United Nations personnel also observed armed individuals digging out and removing large numbers of landmines from around United Nations position 85. On 24 July, UNDOF personnel at the position observed 15 civilians crossing the ceasefire line by up to 90 m and returning to the Bravo side after some 40 minutes. From 15 to 21 August, internally displaced persons also gathered around United Nations position 80, ranging in number from 100 to 300, depending on the security situation.

23. In the vicinity of the ceasefire line in the area of separation, mines continued to pose a threat to UNDOF personnel and local inhabitants. Owing to the long-term presence of the mines and the deterioration of their detonation systems, the threat has increased. With enhanced mine clearing and detection capacity, UNDOF continued to carry out operational mine clearance, disposing of a total of 144 anti-tank and 61 anti-personnel mines.

24. The limitations imposed by the security situation on the Bravo side notwithstanding, UNDOF continued its efforts to liaise with local authorities and engage with the local population to explain the Force's mandate and activities. This remained important in the light of the security situation in the UNDOF area of operation and as part of the effort to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground.

25. As at 19 August, UNDOF comprised 1,168 troops, including 34 women, from Fiji (501), the Philippines (341), India (193), Nepal (130) and Ireland (3). Following the decision by the Government of Austria to withdraw its contingent from UNDOF on short notice, the Government of Fiji agreed to increase its planned contribution of 171 military personnel to replace the Croatian and Japanese contingents to a total of around 500. The Fijian contingent deployed to UNDOF in three groups on 28 June (182 personnel), 27 July (158) and 29 July (161). A Nepalese contingent of 130 personnel arrived on 19 July. The Government of Ireland agreed on 18 July to contribute a 114-strong contingent consisting of a mechanized company, the deployment of which is expected in September. In addition, 85 military observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks.

26. Given the evolving security situation in the UNDOF area of operation, the Force continued to adjust temporarily its operations with a view to ensuring its ability to implement its mandate safely and securely. As such, UNDOF has continued to concentrate on static activities in an effort to reduce the exposure of personnel to danger, while focusing on enhancing situational analysis, reporting and

liaising with the parties to prevent the situation from escalating. UNDOF mobile operations on the Bravo side remain temporarily suspended. The operational adjustments have involved a temporary shift in the focus of the activities of a number of Observer Group Golan military observers, from patrolling and inspection to static observation, liaison and situation analysis. As a result of restrictions put in place by certain Member States on the mobility of observers on the Bravo side, the activities of Observer Group Golan have been hampered significantly.

27. Efforts continue to ensure that the Force has the capacity necessary to fulfil its mandate safely and securely. Pursuing the enhancement of the self-defence capabilities of UNDOF and further to Security Council resolution 2108 (2013), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat approached the parties and provided formally to the Syrian authorities a list of weapons considered essential for UNDOF self-defence and requested the Syrian authorities to facilitate the entry of the weapons and equipment, including armoured personnel carriers with higher-calibre and mounted automatic machine guns, enhanced personal weaponry and other protective equipment. In addition, the Force has introduced a capable force reserve company. Lastly, in an effort to maximize troop strength, following the arrival of the Irish contingent, the UNDOF troop strength will reach some 1,250, within the parameters set forth in the Protocol to the Disengagement Agreement. The process of increasing UNDOF capabilities is continuing.

28. In addition, most of the recommendations arising from the military capability study have been implemented. UNDOF continues to adopt and update mitigation measures on the basis of a comprehensive risk assessment carried out by the Force with the support of the Secretariat. The measures include the reinforcement by UNDOF peacekeepers of observation posts manned by Observer Group Golan observers in sensitive locations, regular rehearsals of evacuation operations, the enhancement of the medical facility in Camp Faouar, improved perimeter control of the Force headquarters and provision of personal protective equipment to all military and civilian personnel, including the necessary training. In addition, UNDOF continued to implement the rehabilitation programme to maintain and upgrade its equipment and infrastructure in an effort to maintain its operational and security capacity. Additional armoured vehicles were deployed to UNDOF with a view to enhancing protection. The strengthening of the Force's existing explosive ordnance disposal capacity was identified as necessary to address the increased presence of improvised explosive devices in the area of operation. The security situation has rendered it necessary for UNDOF to continue to use, with the cooperation of relevant authorities, alternative ports of entry and departure for mission personnel.

29. UNDOF continues to improve the security and safety of United Nations personnel and property. Since my previous report (S/2013/345), two additional security officers have joined the UNDOF security section, bringing the staffing to a total of six. The additional personnel focus on shelter, operational and structural enhancements, improving fire safety arrangements, access control in Camp Faouar, tracking of staff and strengthening the Force's analytical capacity. In addition, security training was conducted for United Nations military and civilian personnel and an internal security clearance system was implemented for UNDOF civilian staff. A number of UNDOF national staff work from home because they are unable to report for work regularly owing to the security situation. Those living in Damascus report for work on a rotational basis and the remainder work in the

UNDOF office in Damascus. Only essential international staff work in Camp Faouar; the offices of non-essential staff have been relocated to Camp Ziouani.

30. A fire broke out on 24 June in the supply warehouse in Camp Ziouani, which is used by an UNDOF contractor. UNDOF prevented the fire from spreading to other buildings. Support was provided to UNDOF by four firefighting trucks from IDF and surrounding villages; in addition, a civilian ambulance from the Alpha side was deployed. After several hours, the fire was fully extinguished. While there were no casualties, the warehouse was completely destroyed. An investigation into the circumstances of the fire is under way.

III. Observations

31. I remain deeply concerned about the further deterioration of the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, its impact on the Syrian population and its potential implications for the stability of the region. The situation has continued to affect the UNDOF area of operation significantly. The ongoing military activities in the area of separation continue to have the potential to heighten tensions between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and to jeopardize the ceasefire between the two countries.

32. The developments in the UNDOF area of operation in general and the heavy clashes, such as those seen on 16 July in the area of separation, underline the volatility of the situation. I reiterate that all military activities in the area of separation conducted by any actor pose a risk to the long-held ceasefire and the local civilian population, in addition to United Nations personnel on the ground. They undermine the Disengagement Agreement and the efforts of UNDOF to implement its mandate, and will continue to be reported as such. I call upon all parties to the Syrian domestic conflict to cease military actions throughout the country, including in the UNDOF area of operation. There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF.

33. The presence of the Syrian armed forces and unauthorized military equipment in the area of separation is a grave violation of the Disengagement Agreement. The IDF retaliatory fire across the ceasefire line too is a serious violation of the Agreement. Any Israeli military action inside the Syrian Arab Republic puts the ceasefire at risk. I call upon Israel to exercise maximum restraint to prevent an escalation of the situation. The commitment to the Agreement must be upheld by both parties in order to maintain relative stability in the Golan. I call upon all parties to take all measures necessary to protect civilians and ensure respect for the safety and security of UNDOF personnel, in addition to freedom of movement for the Force throughout its area of operation. For its part, the United Nations will spare no effort in ensuring that the long-held ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic continues to hold.

34. I also remain deeply concerned by the incidents involving United Nations personnel on the ground. The mandate of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring the stability of the region. It must be recalled that UNDOF was established by the Security Council with the agreement of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, and that its mandate was prescribed by the Disengagement Agreement and the Protocol thereto. UNDOF is mandated to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, to see that it is scrupulously observed and to supervise the

Agreement and the Protocol thereto with regard to the areas of separation and limitation.

35. Any hostile act against United Nations personnel on the ground, including restricting their movement and threatening their physical safety, the direct and indirect firing at United Nations personnel and facilities by the Syrian armed forces or armed members of the opposition, the theft of United Nations weapons and ammunition, vehicles and other assets, and the looting and destruction of United Nations facilities, are unacceptable. The presence and increased use by armed members of the opposition of improvised explosive devices in the UNDOF area of operation merit particular concern. Such devices put United Nations personnel on the ground at risk and impede the freedom of movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan, with some placed so as to directly threaten and isolate some United Nations positions and observation posts. The safety and security of UNDOF personnel and Observer Group Golan military observers, essential for enabling UNDOF to continue to implement its mandate, must be preserved.

36. The primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side rests with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. I again call upon that Government fully to facilitate the efforts of UNDOF to continue implementing its mandate safely and securely. It is imperative that respect for the privileges and immunities of UNDOF and its freedom of movement be ensured. The ability of UNDOF to engage with the local population in its area of operation on its mandate and activities is limited by the prevailing security situation. Armed members of the opposition operating in the UNDOF area of operation must be clearly apprised of the mandate of the Force and must immediately cease any actions that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. I am deeply concerned by recent reports of threatening behaviour by some armed members of the opposition against United Nations personnel on the ground. It remains critical that countries with influence strongly convey to the armed opposition groups in the UNDOF area of operation the need to halt all activities that endanger United Nations peacekeepers on the ground and to accord United Nations personnel the freedom to carry out their mandate safely and securely.

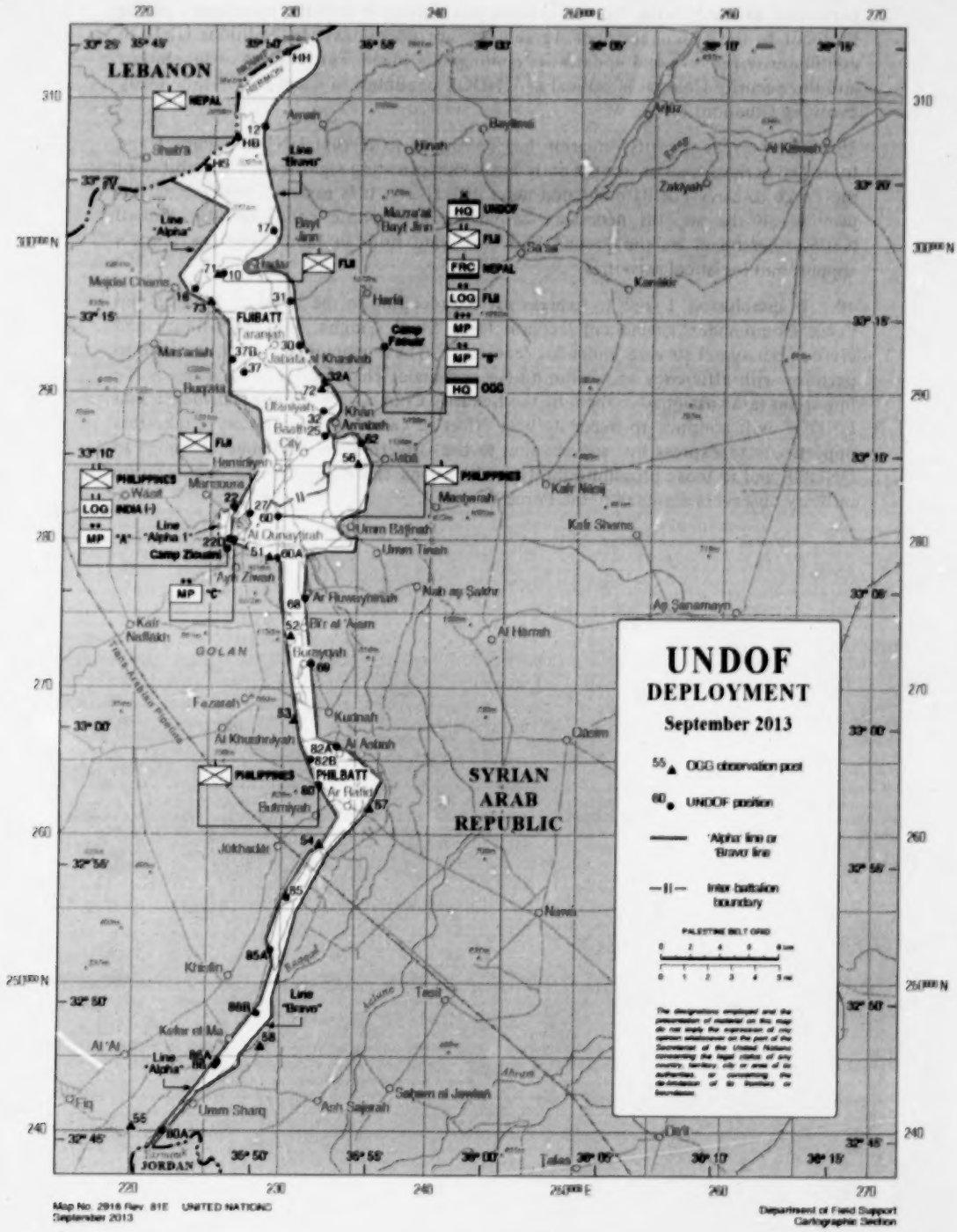
37. It is equally critical that the Security Council continue to bring its influence to bear on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate freely and securely within its area of operation and to carry out its important mandate. It is essential that UNDOF continue to have at its disposal all the means and resources that it needs to carry out its mandate safely and securely. It is vital that UNDOF retain the confidence and commitment of troop-contributing countries. The continued credible presence of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring stability in the Golan and in the region. I am grateful to the Governments of Fiji, Ireland and Nepal, which have stepped in decisively and on short notice to provide troops to the Force to ensure its continued viability. I am also grateful to the Governments of the Philippines and India for continuing their contributions to UNDOF.

38. Given the evolving security situation in its area of operation, the Force regularly reviews and adjusts as necessary its posture and operations and implements necessary mitigation measures. Steps to enhance the self-defence capabilities of UNDOF, including increasing the Force strength to some 1,250

personnel and improving its self-defence equipment, within the parameters of the Protocol to the Disengagement Agreement, are under way. In addition, UNDOF continuously reviews and updates its contingency plans. The support of the parties and the Security Council is critical as UNDOF continues to adapt to a continuously evolving situation.

39. The current security situation has continued to disrupt UNDOF support and logistical activities on an almost daily basis, complicating significantly the ability of the Force to carry out its mandated tasks effectively. It is essential that the parties provide all the support necessary to ensure appropriate conditions for United Nations personnel on the ground and cooperate fully in facilitating the Force's support and logistical activities.

40. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha, and the military and civilian personnel serving under his leadership. These women and men continue to perform with efficiency and commitment and under challenging circumstances the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I have full confidence that UNDOF will continue to make its best effort to carry out its mission. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF and to those providing the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers assigned to the Force.


LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
GOLAN
UNDOF
DEPLOYMENT
September 2013
55 OGG observation post
60 UNDOF position
'Alpha' line or 'Bravo' line
Inter battalion boundary
NEPAL
FIJI
PHILIPPINES
INDIA (-)
FINBATT
PHILBATT
Camp Ziouani
Camp Faouar
HQ UNDOF
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Line "Alpha"
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September 2013
Department of Field Support
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